

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

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The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate now stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:34 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mrs. DOLE).

MAKING FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2003—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 40

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time on the motion to waive?

The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, before recognizing my colleague, Senator DURBIN, let me say the Reed-Durbin amendment would provide up to 1 million Americans who are long-term unemployed and were not assisted by the January 8 amendment we passed. This would be a positive stimulus for our economy. These benefits would be paid out until the economy came back and then automatically stop. It also recognizes the structural changes. The high-tech meltdown and the exodus of manufacturing have left many people without jobs. They need our help now.

Our economy is in distress. We have to help these hard-working Americans. We cannot wait any longer because as we wait, they invade their 401(k)s, they extend their credit cards, they do anything to make ends meet. We should help them now.

I yield the remainder of my time to the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for yielding. I am happy to cosponsor this amendment with him. I am glad it has finally come to a vote.

I listened to the arguments yesterday by the Senators from Oklahoma and Iowa and others who suggested this recession is not that bad; we really should not be talking about a million people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits; things were a lot worse 12 or 13 years ago.

The unemployment rate in the United States of America has increased over 50 percent since October of 2000. We now have 6.0 percent or more who are unemployed in this country, a million of whom have exhausted their unemployment benefits. When the President said he was going to help these families, he forgot a million Americans, 53,000 in my State.

I hope my colleagues in the Senate will understand that the money we have collected over the years and we put in the unemployment trust fund is money designed specifically for this purpose.

Previous Presidents, Democrats and Republicans alike, have noted the need

to help these struggling families. We cannot turn our backs on them. We will have a chance today by voting yes on this amendment, and I hope my colleagues on both sides will join in that effort.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. NICKLES. Madam President, how much time is remaining on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma has 2½ minutes. The Senator from Rhode Island has 36 seconds.

Mr. NICKLES. Madam President, I urge my colleagues to vote no on the motion to waive the budget point of order. I am afraid we are going to have to decide this many times, are we going to be waiving the budget every time we turn around?

There is a reason a budget point of order lies against this amendment. We are on an appropriations bill. Instead of trying to pass appropriations, some people are saying, let's expand entitlements.

It so happens we did this January 7. The Senate unanimously passed a bill to expand unemployment compensation, extend the present law through May, and it cost us about \$7.2 billion.

Now our colleagues are coming back and saying: This is a 13-week Federal program. Let's make it a 26-week Federal program, except let's even do more. The Federal program today is up to 13 weeks. The bill we have before us says all States get a mandatory 26 weeks. It is not coupled to what the State programs have.

We have never done that in the history of the United States. We have always coupled Federal unemployment extensions with the State program. But that is not what this amendment does. The amendment was not drafted well and was not thought out well. It is very expensive. It is about the fifth iteration we have seen, and it is still not done very well.

I urge my colleagues, if they want to do it, introduce the bill, have it referred to the appropriate committee, have that committee have hearings on it and mark it up with professional staff to do a good job. This is grossly irresponsible. It would cost \$6.3 billion.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a Congressional Budget Office letter stating that fact.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, January 22, 2003.

Hon. DON NICKLES,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: As requested by your staff, CBO has prepared a preliminary estimate of the costs of amendment number 40 to House Joint Resolution 2. This amendment would expand the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 2002 (as

amended by Public Law 108-1) to provide additional weeks of federal unemployment benefits by increasing the maximum number of additional weeks of benefits available in all states from 13 to 26. The amendment also would change the number of weeks available in states with high unemployment from 13 to 7.

CBO estimates that enactment of this amendment would increase outlays by between \$5.8 billion and \$5.9 billion in 2003, and by about \$500 million in 2004, for a total cost of about \$6.3 billion. Under our most current estimates, there would be no significant budgetary effects in subsequent years. Under the March 2002 baseline assumptions, there would be an offsetting increase in revenues in later years because this spending would reduce the amount of Reed Act transfers assumed under the March projections. However, CBO has not yet estimated this effect.

If you have additional questions about this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Christi Hawley Sadoti, who may be reached at 226-2820.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON,
Acting Director.

Mr. NICKLES. Colleagues, let's have regular order in the Senate. Why have the Finance Committee have jurisdiction over an issue if we are just going to skip the committee and consider it on the floor? Are we going to do this with every authorizing committee? There is an appropriations bill, let's ignore the authorizing committee and come up with all kinds of entitlement expansions. That is the reason a budget point of order lies against this. That budget point of order is well taken.

This chairman of the Budget Committee plans on enforcing the budget. I urge my colleagues to vote no on the motion to waive the Budget Act.

Mr. KENNEDY. Since President Bush assumed office in January 2001, the economic well-being of America's families has significantly deteriorated, and a major cause of this crisis for so many families is the economic policy of the Bush administration, which has neglected the basic needs of working men and women, lavished extravagant tax breaks on the wealthiest taxpayers, and allowed corporate abuse and excess to go unchecked.

Today, nearly 8.6 million Americans are unemployed—2.6 million more than when President Bush took office. Due to the lack of available jobs, the number of long-term unemployed—those out of work for more than 6 months, has now soared to nearly 2 million—a 70 percent increase from last year. Long-term unemployment has increased in every month since March 2001. It is clear that Congress needs to do more for these Americans, who have worked hard, played by the rules, and are suffering because of the economic downturn.

The new law enacted earlier this month provided needed assistance for many of the unemployed, but it does nothing for the 1 million long-term unemployed who have run out of their State and Federal unemployment benefits and still have not found jobs. These Americans are struggling to make ends meet. Many have depleted their savings